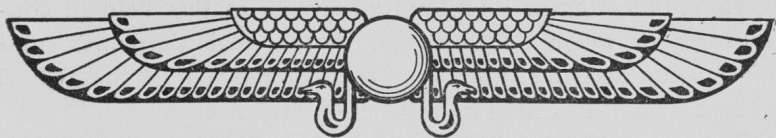


"Point out the 'Way'—However dimly, and lost among the host—as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness."



MERCURY.

EDITORIAL + STAFF:

WILLIAM JOHN WALTERS, +
Marie A. Walsh, C. Wachtmeister,
Edith Sears.

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THE ROYAL ROAD.

VIEWED occultly, man shines as a light, set in the center of many veils of consciousness. These coverings of consciousness are sometimes called his "bodies," and so the covering nearest his spirit is named the spiritual body; then the light of this immortal god shining outward still further, reflects itself in an intermediate vehicle, which is used for traveling on the plane out of whose material it is fashioned. Beyond this, also, the outward-going rays yet more deeply dull their luminosity in a covering of fine matter known as the *etheric double*. Thus we have the triple garment of the Self-shining One, which it has woven around itself in obedience to the law of pulsation residing in the great breath of Brahm. For the essence of the planet must be assimilated if he would awaken it from its lethargic slumber into spiritual life.

Thus, it was the *mind* which built the nervous system by reiterated vibrations upon certain focal centers, by traveling from those large centers to smaller ones, and thus making well-worn pathways in the plastic substance of the etheric double: for the nervous system proper, resides in the etheric double. The mind,

therefore, reflecting its multiform vibrations in this field of consciousness or magnetic outreach, is the real Carpenter and Builder—the destroyer also—and the foster-father of that Child of Light named in Christian mysticism, “the Son of God.”

This son of the Sun, this Self-shining Being, in sending its rays outward through the substance of man’s undulating sphere, *one direct* Pathway—one Supreme flow—which is named “The Royal Road.” Stand anywhere you will (and by *you* I mean your mind-force, your consciousness)—stand anywhere you will in this sphere around yourself, *except* in that direct Pathway, and you look through veils of greater or less density; they are your Robes of Maya—the reflections of the immortal Light, but not the Light itself. No matter at *what* point, you take up your position, if it be *outside* of this immortal, atomic flow you will be unable to touch the level of clear sight; a veil is over your vision. And the entire history of the world has proven how unsafe is psychic vision alone. On it have been built huge systems of oppression which at first were only huge images projected from men’s minds, and later on, entering other men’s minds, crystallized, and made generations of mental slaves. Are we not in the midst of such slaving now? Where, in what direction, shall we look, for minds disenthralled from the entangling lines thrown over them by stronger minds seeking to dominate their weaker fellow-mortals?

But the cry of the ancient sages was for liberation, for freedom, for the truth of man’s *real* nature—not merely his apparent one; they worked for clear sight—the sight of the eagle that gazes at the spiritual sun, that *became* the Sun; for they knew that sight and knowledge were one; they knew that the subject and the object were one, and that the wandering mind of man must be brought to a state of stillness and blent with the Light which gave it birth before real knowledge could be gained.

Ages ago those mighty teachers reached that goal and flung the door wide ajar—from which portal, since ages ago, their voices have been sounding through the illusion of time, telling all men who have ears to hear, in what manner and by what method they, too, may gain the same goal. How simple the process. Listen to their plain directions:

"You, the Reflection, you who have gazed at your shadow in the waters until the Shadow has hypnotized you into the continuous mental image that you are the Shadow—you have only to de-hypnotize yourself by identifying your shadow-self with the real, unborn Self, Ruler of your magnetic field of consciousness, Evolver of your sphere—you have only to fasten this fluctuating mind-force (now spinning at the periphery) upon the changeless portion of your nature to enable you to regain your ancient birth-right. For man becomes what he reflects upon.

Over and over again those sages have pointed out the way—have mapped minutely the Royal Road leading to the Kingdom of Light and liberation. They tell you to forget the image which your mirror throws back at you and to regard yourself as an undulating sphere of multiform but immortal consciousness. (O)

The breath of Brahm, the great soundless Sound, enters, they say, at the top of this sphere and flows downward in a series of cascades through the central channel in the spinal column, falling in a jet of light within the Heart, and thence onward. The etheric nervous system is fed from this flow of ever-living force: for in IT "we live and move and have our being." So they tell you to go to the Heart where the Light wells up and make the conversion *there* at that sacred spot, the City of Benares, anciently so-called, where the esoteric Ganges flow—to go *there* in order to make the change from the sensuous man to the man Divine. *This* is throwing yourself at the foot of the Cross—is it not? the crossroads between spirit and etheric matter. Use your image-making power as a sort of boat, or vehicle, to effect a transfer of consciousness from the outside of your Auric Sphere to its Center. Thus is gained the introspection recommended by the Man of Nazareth. A translation of the Vatican MS. runs as follows:

"But thou, when thou would'st pray, enter into the secret retired place of thee, and locking the door of thee, pray thou to the Father of thee, to the Father in the Secret, and the Father of thee who is seeing in the secret place, will give to thee in the open clear Light." [Translation from the Emphatic Diaglott in the Vatican at Rome.]

So here is your outline map given by all the sages of all time, and you have only to send your mentality through these images along the Royal Road in order to reach the sacred levels of deathlessness, of pure knowledge, love and bliss complete unspeakable. Saturated with this current you will become what the current is—wise, pure, strong, glorious, devoid of all hatred, full of compassion—you will go back to your real nature and become joined to it.

Note well the difference in the kind of efforts put forth and their resultants. The mental union must be with the central current ONLY, if safety is insured. If the subject allows his mentality to coalesce with any of the reflections or shadow-images, he is lost in the bewildering mazes of psychism, and must with pain retrace his steps.

The luminous essence of Divinity is the Over-soul of all, but the difference among men is created by their lack of receptivity or their proportion of receptivity to its radiations. Character is the measure of the amount of Light which has been assimilated, and morals are, therefore, a finer science.

Truthfulness of nature stands for harmony with the Over-soul. Untruthfulness sets up a discordant vibration and literally breaks up the enveloping sphere of elemental essence; for no man can serve two masters.

Chastity of mind conserves the divine fire, and its opposite blockades man's advance by a destructive waste of material which renders the attainment of adept levels impossible. Maharshi Bhriḡu gives some general rules to discover what sort of vibrations operating in the past have sown the seeds of present effects.

Mental bad Karma, he says, brings on bad environment, and this Karma consists of (1) desiring that which does not rightfully belong to one's self; (2) thinking about injuring others; (3) materialism.

Verbal bad Karma consists of (1) harsh and insulting words; (2) lying; (3) slandering; (4) unnecessary talk. And this sort of Karma, he says, produces "senselessness."

Corporeal bad Karma brings on loss of physical and nervous powers; and this consists of (1) theft; (2) bodily injury to any

living being; (3) disobedience to six laws. Thus, all of experience declares that Destiny is but the outworking of vibratory flows which, throughout the long Past, have been set up in the mind; and we, at this present moment, are the geometrical resultants of this stupendous combine of complex mental imagery. So, he would cross the Ocean of birth and death, he who desires freedom with sufficient earnestness to make the strong effort needed for it, he who would wed with Truth alone; with purified Love alone—he who can catch a glimpse of the greatness of the joy of this supreme attraction, who finds it impossible to be satisfied with any life below the super-sensuous, who would become victor over Death's frowning visage and over Fear's alarm—he who would unite himself with Reality, with Wisdom's self, and joy unalloyed, *he* it is who must cross on the shining raft of Brahm, reaching to the heart-center, the City of the Highest, and *he* it is who must there dissolve his mind within that Light and learn the supreme secret, holding within his grasp, thenceforward, the keys of futurity and of power!

“They know not truth who dream such vacant dreams
As father, mother, children, wife and friend.

The sexless Self! Whose father He? Whose child?
Whose friend? Whose foe is He who is but One?

The Self is all in all; none else exists;
And thou art That, Sanyasin bold, and thou art That!

Where seekest thou that freedom, friend, this world nor that can
give?

In books and temples, vain thy search,
Thine only is the hand that holds the rope that drags thee on.
Then, cease lament, let go the hold, Sanyasin bold,
Know thou art That, know thou art That!

Truth never comes where lust and fame, and greed of gain
reside.

No man who, as his wife, of woman thinks, can ever perfect be;
Nor he who owns the least of things,
Nor he whom anger chains, can pass through Maya's gates,
So give these up, Sanyasin bold, know thou art That.

Few only know the truth.

The rest will hate, and laugh at thee, great one, but pay no heed;
Be free, go thou from place to place and help them out of darkness, Maya's veil.

Without the fear of pain or search for pleasure,
Go beyond them both, Sanyasin bold,
Know thou are That, know thou art That!"

M. L. B.

What Food is Best.

I AM asked to give my reasons for advocating the vegetarian diet. We have to study life in its varied aspects to know the true value of vegetarianism. Below man are kingdoms in nature over which he may rule in a Godlike way. They pay tribute to him and he can respond beneficently or destructively. In the vegetable kingdom a great tidal wave of the life energy is pulsating and we can guide this energy through our understanding, and reap from its manifestation a fruitage that sustains our needs. This taken at the ripened stage of the expression hinders nothing of the development of the unindividualized energy of that wave of manifestation. There is no destruction in gleaming the products of the vegetable kingdom, the energy is simply thrown back from one extremity into the root power to express itself without hinderance at another point. In the animal kingdom it is different, we find individualized entities. Man really stands toward the entities of the animal kingdom as the gods do to man. He has in his power their weal or woe, he can by co-operating with the evolutionary law of the universe rapidly hasten the development of these dumb creatures, thus bringing them to the perfected experiences of their kingdom and making them perfect after their kind. Man recognizes this power of his to perfect the fruits of the fields, and joys in the aid he can give to nature in the work of the vegetable kingdom; but evil habits have blinded him to his duty and obligation to the creatures just below the human. He stimulates multiplication of brute life that he may revel in its destruction, and wanton in blood. He becomes the destroyer where he should be the educator.

He is as a destructive and merciless God to all these dependent entities of the animal world. He makes the earth a slaughter house whose fumes outrage heaven and poison humanity.

Now how does this effect the humanity? Let us face facts. A portion of mankind bury the larger part of the dead of the animal kingdom in their own anatomies. Think of it, the human stomach a burial place for the dead creature of a lower kingdom? Horrible! A pity it is 'tis true. Thus man poisons and debases the physical instrument his soul must work through to express itself on this plane. Thus the machinery of the body is clogged and it works poorly; while the passionate nature fed on blood emanations of the beasts grows all powerful.

I am often asked if meat is not necessary to give strength? What does nature reply to this inquiry? Stop just a moment and reflect on what animals are the enduring ones at laborious tasks. Those who subsist entirely on herbs and grains. The meat-eating animal being irritable, unreliable, quickly wearied, and requiring sleep after eating. So much for unsullied nature's own answer to the question. Personally, I know mental labor can be sustained more hours on a vegetable diet than when meat is eaten. One can go from a vegetarian meal to their desk and work continually for hours without discomfort, while a meat diet requires a period of rest after eating, or one pays the penalty of a headache. But more serious than all this is the moral effect on man of a meat diet. St. Paul tells us "there is a natural body and a spiritual body"—Occultism, the Scientific of Theosophy. endorses St. Paul's statement and also teaches there is an astral body. If with gross food we feed the natural body, the emanations of that food, its astral equivalent, feeds our astral body. If our food be of blood or alcoholic, gross and passionate becomes our astral body. The desire nature governs the physical and the music of the souls vibrations cannot win response from these untuned instruments, the gross physical and astral bodies. Then the lower nature governs in life. At death, on passing from the physical, we are hindered by a gross astral from rising to the heights beyond, held in bondage on the dense astral plane through the correspondence of the degrees of density governing

in our bodies. On the contrary, pure foods, pure and unselfish thoughts, attune these vehicles of the higher self to respond to the higher vibrations. On earth man becomes purified and noble; at death his freedom from the slums of the astral world are assured. These are some of my reasons for advocating vegetarianism.

THE RELATION OF THEOSOPHY TO POLITICS.

THE object of the present paper is to state as briefly, and as clearly as possible, some opinions regarding the moral aspect of political agitation. We do not propose to deal with abstractions, but with men and their actions in political life. Our intention is to treat of the ethical elements that enter into political movements, and our only object is the elucidation of truth.

In the course of politics there is no more striking fact than the almost entire absence of anything like sound political thought among the masses of the people during periods of political commotion and unrest. Such times are particularly unfavorable to the exercise of discriminating thought and reflection. One class of citizens is conspicuous by the cynical indifference with which it regards the ethical side of the issues involved; its only interest is attached to their supposed connection with its personal affairs; it regards a zealous partisan who is honestly contending for what he believes to be a moral principle as a sort of lunatic, and looks upon his well-meant enthusiasm as a species of mental aberration.

This class does not come within the scope of our effort, because its position lies outside the range of moral criticism; it is not amenable to any but purely selfish considerations, and its distinguishing trait is the absence of the higher forms of sensibility. But there is another class which places itself with inconsiderate zeal on one side or the other in the conflict of interests and ideas; its conscience and common sense are swallowed up in the vortex of political emotion; the only mental nourishment which it will accept, is that, which it receives from interested and partisan sources, and any statements, no matter how absurd or irrational,

that flatter its vanity or pander to its prejudices, are received with the most puerile credulity.

There is yet another class which, devoid of narrow prejudice, is sincerely anxious to do its duty, but which, drifting with the popular current, has not mental originality enough to cast off the trammels imposed upon its mind by the force of convention and prevailing sentiment.

Now, the one great and fundamental idea of modern Democratic society in its political sense, is that of self-sacrifice; for political liberty means the right to deny one's self for the good of others, and a general and continued failure to comprehend this great and indispensable truth, which is really the Theosophical conception of the Universal Brotherhood of Man, under another aspect, will end sooner or later in the destruction of modern society as at present constituted. For democracy is, as yet, but on trial, and its permanent existence is identified with the general application to its methods of the universal principles of truth, justice and human love. Society is an organism; and sin against any of the principles that govern the relations of men in organic society does not only mean that a wrong of a local or impermanent character has been inflicted upon a certain individual, or class, or institution, but that an evil vibration has been set in motion, which will never cease to produce a baneful influence upon the affairs of men, until it is lost in the end of time.

For a committal to public action may entail grave responsibilities, and very serious consequences sometimes have their origin in very small beginnings, for the reason that in the world of human affairs, as in the world of nature, there is no absolute dis-severation; all of the phenomena are parts of one great whole, and their various manifestations are subject to the same unvarying law. The most fundamental law of the Universe is the law of cause and effect, called in Theosophy the Law of Karma; this assures us that action without effect is impossible; but, as the effect is also an action which is a cause in itself, the consequences of action are therefore infinite and interminable.

We have briefly indicated that a large proportion, perhaps the majority of citizens, are swayed from the path of public duty,

which is really for them the logical investigation of political propositions, by the combined forces of prejudice, credulity and self-interest, in the guise of patriotism; for those who are imbued with a true conception of the ethical nature of political duties are the rare exceptions among men. The great majority never dream of [subjecting to a critical analysis any political measure that is presented for their consideration.

We believe that one of the chief causes of this frivolous contempt for general interests is based upon a want of understanding of the serious character of the obligations upon which rests the condition² of citizenship, and a general tendency to look forward to a political contest as a time of relaxation and pleasurable excitement; for love of pleasure influences the motives and actions of the greater number in nearly everything that does not concern their own personal affairs; it is the disposition to shirk all duties which require the application of thought and reflection; it is not the inability to think so much as it is the disinclination, because the most of men have a repugnance to labor of a mental character, and like best to have their thinking done by proxy.

It is obvious that emotional agitation and a reckless disregard of secondary and remote consequences resulting from a consciousness of perfect national security and inviolability, by weakening the springs of patriotism, contribute in some measure to the belief that public responsibility may be waived in favor of personal and partisan considerations, without detriment to the national honor and prosperity.

The inference then is that natural desire is the base of political evil, for the mainspring of the latter is self-indulgence, which has its source in the love of pleasure; and that being merely a passive instrument may be good or bad, according to the nature of its objects; so that the cure of evil resolves itself into a problem which depends for its solution upon the compliance of the desire with the dictates of the conscience; and this can only be accomplished by the substitution of good for bad as the object of desire, or by a general sense of the realization that man's happiness is dependant upon and is identical with the happiness of his fellow creatures.

As we have seen, the great proportion of men in political action are the slaves of their emotions, prejudices and interests, so that it must be borne in mind when we think of the capacity of a nation for self-government, that we do not think of the people as a whole, for the degree of national capacity can only be measured by the proportion of its citizens who are susceptible to rational and ideal influences; and it is to this class, small in proportion to the whole number, that we depend upon in a crises to throw its weight on the side of justice, common sense and the true national interests, against the forces of near-sighted selfishness and present expediency. It is the amount of influence of this class of independent political thinkers upon the national policy that determines the character of legislation and of administration, and it is upon its growth and degree of consistency and courage that depends the fulfillment of the national destiny. This conclusion then shows us the hopelessness of emotional and superficial methods in the cause of political reform, which can only be effected by the slow infiltration of moral and rational thought into the pores of the human mind.

When we begin to consider the influences that might combine to promote the growth of rational and ethical thought in public affairs, the question arises of the possibilities of ethical culture in the average mind in the course of one generation, and the difficulty of the natural limitations of the human intellect is at once presented. The question is one that concerns the interest of every individual, for upon it depends the permanency and success of democratic institutions, and whatever his condition in life, or mental or moral capacity, no civilized man questions the value of political liberty as an aid to human perfection and happiness; and especially is it a matter of deep concern to that better section of the people to whom we have referred, for it is in it that the patriotic instinct in its widest sense is most strongly developed; upon it falls the burden of grief for national misfortune and disgrace, and by virtue of the possession of superior intelligence and greater foresight rests the responsibility of unfolding the truth, and of pointing out the way of political salvation to the masses of the people. But this class itself is not free from blame, for the folly and evil that fill the national life; for one of the curiosities

of American society is the fastidious timidity which impels the better class of citizens to leave the field of political contention in the hands of those who have made the name of politics a stench in the nostrils of honest men.

In reflecting upon the means of application of ethical methods to political movements, it must not be forgotten that if Christianity is not entirely blameless for error and mistake, it is but human in its instrumentality, even though it be divine in its origin, and it would be folly to permit prejudice to blind us to the great value of the effects of religious thought and precept upon private character and conduct, and to the necessity of the utilization of religious influence in the work of political regeneration; but religion should not overlook the fact that man is a social animal, and that his destiny on earth seems to be the attainment of political as well as of spiritual perfection, for we believe that this question belongs to the domain of morals; that politics and ethics are convertible terms, and that it lies in the province of religion to teach morality and rebuke vice in the public as well as in the private world, and this is the duty that religion in the widest acceptance of the term, religion in its noblest form, the religion of humanity, should make an object of fulfillment.

It cannot but be apparent to the simplest understanding, the futility of expecting any perceptible change in the basic conditions of the human mind in the course of one generation. We know that all good and evil are based upon inherent and latent possibilities, existing undiscovered and unthought of until made manifest by the force of necessity and circumstance.

An orthodoxy has not recognized this fact, but has based its procedure on ultimate conversion in one lifetime by the power of faith in producing repentance by means of the ideas of pain and pleasure, repressing the movements of sin in the emotional nature, but leaving the spirit and inherent tendencies untouched; it has quickened the spiritual pulse at the expense of the intellect by confining the movements of the mind in prescribed channels, has checked the flow of independent thought, has put into mutual antagonism the spirit and the reason—two of the most potent forces in making for the right, and by fixing the thoughts of men

exclusively upon the transcendental world, has kept out of sight the ethical possibilities that exist for humanity upon the surface of the planet—by implication it has made a clear distinction between politics and ethics, and ignored the truth that upright political conduct is a necessary condition of morality. Theosophy is the first outpourings of the spiritual essence from the springs of the human mind, which, having been lost for ages in the desert wastes of superstitious fancy, reappears in the present as the river of truth and light, fed by the fountain of reason, and flowing into the ocean of infinity. Theosophy is not a religious system, but a system of morality based on the principle of self-renunciation, making it a primary condition of all spiritual progress. It inculcates the truth that it is only a spurious form of good which may be accomplished without victory over self, and it makes self-abnegation an absolute virtue—the base of all virtue—because it prepares and strengthens the fibre of the mind for future efforts in the direction of good; its hopes of the purification of the soul are not confined to the limits of time embraced in one generation; it realizes that the generic state of the mind forbids the idea of conversion without purification, and it realizes that this is impossible whilst tendencies to evil remain latent in the soul.

Theosophy is universal, because it embraces and invites universal co-operation; it does not exact faith in an arbitrary conception of the final cause as requisite to salvation, for it recognizes the philosophic truth that faith depends upon conclusions leading from the reasoning faculties of the mind, and for which the subject is not morally responsible.

It believes that human nature is stronger than the spirit, but it also believes in the freedom to hope, to wish and to struggle, to deny as the means to bring one's self by continuous effort to regard virtue as an object of pleasure and utility. It dispenses with the necessity of form as a means to an end; it subordinates the present to the future, and it makes intelligence contribute to morality by making it a necessary condition of spiritual progression. It believes that sin is a voluntary act of wrong against a sentient being, for sin is never purely subjective in its character and final results. The opposite of sin then being the idea of the manifes-

tation of universal benevolence and justice, which is virtue; and the idea of the Universal Brotherhood of Man implying the same thing, therefore it and virtue are essentially identical in their nature and objects; and Theosophy demanding from its disciples a practical admission of this great truth, commits itself definitely to the cause of human regeneration; and, therefore, it should never permit the political prejudices of its votaries to compel it to assume a negative and neutral attitude, when every principle of right, and every demand of conscience calls upon it to assert and to maintain the eternal principles of truth and justice. One of its primary duties is to speak with positive and direct emphasis upon all public issues involving questions of an ethical nature. It should endeavor to impress upon the public mind that men have certain absolute and universal rights, which are morally inalienable, and which are independent of the limits of any political jurisdiction. It should bear in mind the blighting effect of political corruption upon private morals, and it should strive to awaken the sense of duty in those citizens who are mentally capable of judging the difference between what is expedient and what is right; for it is a waste of energy to endeavor to teach the higher truths to those who are intellectually unadapted to receive them. It should impress the truth of the aphorism that "hell is paved with good intentions"—that clearness of vision is not one and the same thing with sense of duty—that fastidiousness is but another form of cowardice, and that pessimism is but a plea for the avoidance of political responsibilities; that the real greatness of a people, its true prosperity, the value of its institutions, and their degree of permanency, depends upon its standard of right, and its recognition of the truth that any deviation from principle for the attainment of an object, however good in itself, is certain in the end to be subject to the retribution which follows the violation of a moral or economic law; that a principle is always the same, and is independent of circumstances, or of time or place, or of the individuals whose happiness or rights are concerned in it; that men should ask themselves how far should one section of the people permit themselves to go in imposing ideas of a doubtful or insolvable character upon the people at large; for, should

one citizen be willing to venture on an experiment of uncertain value to himself when it is almost sure to work harm to his fellow-men, it should teach that we cannot get rid of political evil by the homeopathic plan of substituting one evil for another, although it may be sometimes expedient as a matter of choice to try the lesser; for it is doubtful if an absolute wrong is not preferable to a compromise, because the latter may condone injustice and profane right by identifying it with evil, for it puts the good in a false position, and gives an act the abnormal character of being good and bad at the same time; that men should beware of thoughts and opinions which give pleasure, in believing them to be true; for the most dangerous political error is that which its perpetrators imagine to be a form of good, because it insidiously takes possession of the mind on false pretenses, and its subject is always unconscious of its true character; that the consequences of action should be carefully weighed; for in politics, men are oftenest swayed by their immediate necessities, and are more or less insensible to the more distant results; that the substitution of legal enactments in place of religious influences, by dispensing with the necessity of personal initiative, disintegrates the moral fibre, and renders the individual less capable of resisting immoral contagion; that men should rationally submit to the conditions imposed upon them by the force of nature and necessity; that it is a contemptible patriotism which impels men to refuse to apply the ethical principles that underlie the laws that govern them to their actions, involving the welfare and rational freedom of the people of another State; that the end and aim of the State are individual liberty and personal rights, indissolubly linked with the ideas of duty and responsibility.

Men in the past were cruel and remorseless in their repression of what they believed to be error, because they thought it a form of ingratitude towards an infinitely just and loving Father. Men in the present are broadly humane, sympathetic and tolerant, because they have learned that sin is the result of weakness; pity has taken the place of indignation, and punishment and repression are simply methods of self-preservation; for science in shattering the idols of unreasoning faith, and in unravelling the web of mystical interpretation, has shown that man is the victim of

relentless necessity, and has caused in a great degree the spirit of modern altruism to be substituted in place of the agency of divine charity in the amelioration of human suffering and misfortune.

There is a close connection between politics and human misery, because political corruption is largely due to poverty and the conditions of mind that produce it, so that to remove the causes of poverty is mainly to remove the causes of political corruption. The main cause of human misery is the inequality in the natural powers of adaptation to life conditions, or want of harmony in the social relations which means a state of sin in the individual. There are minor causes, but they are all embraced in this one general cause, and if we accept its truth, we see at once the difficulty that enshrouds the problems of poverty and sin. But human misery has a value in its incentive to a nobler life, in the consciousness that it often springs from yielding to the cravings of the animal nature.

Theosophy teaches that poverty can never be extinguished by the wisdom of organized society, because the mental state that produces it is generic, and it can only be eradicated by the spiritual impress of mind on mind in the long course of successive generations; it teaches that misery is the consequence of sin, and that sin is the outflow from the hidden springs of desire in the recesses of the mind, which can only be perfected by incessant effort from within. It does not promise immediate results, it only points out the truth, the way and the instrument, which is the belief in and practice of Universal Human Brotherhood; for love is the will to self-sacrifice—the opposite of self-indulgence, and if poverty springs from the latter, therefore poverty may result from want of the capacity for loving. Theosophy presents no code of morals; it simply prescribes the absorption of self in love, justice, truth and duty, and insists that it is only by unceasing and unfaltering mind compelling work that human nature can be charged with the spirit of selflessness.

Theosophy teaches that the law of Karma applies collectively as it does individually, and that national misfortune is the inevitable consequence of national guilt; that a nation's destiny

depends upon the character of its people, and that self-indulgence is the root of public, as it is of private evil. In this way the law of Karma is a potent instrument on the side of virtue, for man is intensely conscious of his present and immediate existence, and a theory of retribution which appeals to his sense of actual experiment must have a greater deterring force than that which depends for effect upon a vague and indefinite perception of an eternal and unchangeable hereafter in an unknown world. Socrates thought that of all the consequences of our conduct, its effect upon our own spiritual nature was the most important. And so, far more important than the positive and material results of public action is its effect upon the national energy and character, for no acquisition of wealth or territory, and no increase in degree of power or glory can compensate a nation for moral deterioration.

FRANK COUSINS, F. T. S.

THE FORUM DEPARTMENT.

Any person can send questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. When necessary, the various communications will be condensed by the editor. Be careful to write only on one side of the paper.

QUESTION CCCLXII.

1. *When a person dies prematurely by accident or in the case of a suicide, does the astral body continue to exist and grow in the atmosphere of the earth, until the Karmic hour of release has struck?*

M.—It is distinctly stated in Theosophic literature that the Lingha Sharira (astral body proper) decays as the physical body decays; in the case of cremation there is instant disintegration; therefore, it is not likely that the mode of death would make any difference in the working of the law.

Moreover, is not the disintegration of the physical form, or so-called death, a result of Karmic causes, whether that disintegration be brought about suddenly by murder, accident, or suicide, or slowly, by the working of disease or wearing out of age? In both cases, causes known or unknown have determined certain

results. What are birth and death with all the events intervening but the results of causes working outwards from the thought world, the world of the Ego, to the objective plane of the physical where thought and will become act and event. The events termed accidents are governed by the law of cause and effect just as much as the ordinary facts of life; and the people who are bereft of their physical bodies by so-called accident are simply paying a Karmic debt. "The Karmic hour of their release has struck" just as truly and clearly as if they had quietly died in their beds. Eternal laws do not err.

Even in the case of the suicide the law works justly; for the overpowering mental conditions impelling him to the act have grown from seeds of doubt, of selfishness, of ignorance sown in past lines. And as the hosts of darkness, of despair, of passion sweep over the soul, it may, through its power of choice, either conquer or fail, Karma is not fatality. But if the soul falls a victim to the evil conditions it has created and nourished, and rids itself of its body which disintegrates together with its astral mould, yet it, the personal soul with its passions, its miseries still lives. This question of the condition of the personal consciousness brings us to the direct answer.

The Lingha Sharira is not the only astral body (see "Man and his Bodies"). Every principle has the power to clothe itself in form; and until the high planes are reached, these forms are frequently called "astral forms."

In the ordinary process of dying, either of disease or of old age, the separation of the consciousness from its physical vehicle is gradual; the bonds are consciously loosened so that when they fall apart and the soul is free, it is able to pass rapidly through the lower levels and thus reach its home in Devachan. But in the case of accident there is no gradual separation. The consciousness centered in the physical life is, in an instant without any warning, deprived of the physical vehicle through which alone it experienced life: It is a terrible, paralyzing moment, and if no help comes, the soul drunk with the desires of physical life lingers within the Earth's attraction in its Kama-Rupa or Kama-Manasic Rupa—Rupa means form—and in this form which

is often called "astral," though it is not the Lingha Sharira, it tries to come into touch with objective life until some "Invisible Helper" shows it the way to freedom.

So, also, the suicide would continue to live on the low levels; but in this case, fear, doubt, despair, unsatisfied passion envelop it in darkness and hold it enchained. Thus during long years the consciousness centered in the astral form of desire lives over and over again the awful crisis which robbed it of its physical vesture.

These forms attract to themselves astral matter in the same way that a thought may clothe itself in this ethereal essence, or they may attach themselves to one still in the physical body and in this may grow stronger, more definite and tangible.

Such facts gathered from the experience of those conscious on astral planes go to prove that in ordinary cases when a person dies suddenly from violence or by suicide, the separation of the principles forming the entity is less complete and harmonious than when death is a gradual process, and that the human Soul is, in a sense, earthbound and fettered to its desire form lingering on low Kama-Loca levels, where it may continue for a long period if its love of physical life be very strong or it finds an organism to which it can attach itself.

QUESTIONS TO BE DEALT WITH IN THE NEXT AND SUBSEQUENT ISSUES OF THE FORUM.

1. *In the May number of MERCURY it is said that the precessional year starts in its Cancer month. How does the writer figure this out, and what are his authorities?*

2. *In an article by H. P. B., in Vahan No. 1, occurs the following: "Unless we succeed in placing the T. S. before this date (1897-98) on the safe side of the spiritual current, it will be swept away into the deep called 'Failure,' and the cold waves of oblivion will close over its doomed head." What is to be understood by this, are the Masters still working with the Society, or have they already withdrawn their help?*

3. *Is the injunction of "Light on the Path" "to kill out desire of comfort" altogether rational?*

Answers should be sent in as soon as possible.

T. S. ECHOES.

LECTURE TOUR OF MRS. ANNIE BESANT.

TO THE EDITOR OF MERCURY:

On Monday afternoon, April 26th, we left Ogden, one of the largest towns in Utah, and speeding round the head of the Salt Lake, across desert and over the beautiful Sierra Nevada mountains right down the length of California, we arrived on Wednesday evening at San Diego, beautifully situated on its bay, not far from the frontiers of Mexico. Here we rejoined the Countess, who had gone on straight from Salt Lake City to meet her son, Count Axel Wachtmeister. In the evening the drawing room of the hotel was filled two or three times in succession by the crowds of people who flocked to see Mrs. Besant. Amongst them were a few of our old members, and it was pleasant to see them expand into a wider appreciation of the grand aims and objects of the organization to which we belong, as they listened during the three days we were in San Diego, to the lucid and convincing lectures given by Mrs. Besant, and were present at the daily conversations where they had an opportunity of putting some of the difficulties which had puzzled them, until they finally united with the new members and formed a Lodge.

Mrs. Besant lectured twice in the pretty little theatre at San Diego, and, thanks to Count Axel's care and business capacity, all the arrangements were well carried out. An afternoon lecture on "Theosophy and Its Teachings" enabled many to be present who could not go in the evening, and when we left on Saturday, May 1st, we felt that we had found several people who might become centers of Theosophic thought in their respective neighborhoods.

Several kind members of the Los Angeles Lodge met us at the station, and we were driven to the pleasant home of Mrs. Freeman, who was hospitality itself during our stay in that city. In the evening a reception was given by the Harmony Lodge of the T. S., and the two or three hundred people present were presented to Mrs. Besant and the Countess and "shook hands," some good music by friends and short speeches by Mrs. Besant and the Countess filled up a pleasant evening.

The six days spent in Los Angeles were utilized for Lodge meetings, four public lectures, conversations and meetings at the Headquarters of the Society and private interviews—besides a visit to Pasadena and its Lodge of earnest students and a lecture and afternoon talk there. The new members all joined the Harmony Lodge.

Last night, Friday, May 7th, we left our many mind members at Los Angeles, and wishing them all success in their work, took the train for San Francisco. From there our proposed route goes through Portland, Tacoma, Seattle, Olympia to Spokane, where we expect to be on June 3d.

May 25th.—On White Lotus Day we reached San Francisco, and were met in Oakland and escorted across the bay by Mr. Walters, as well as by the Brahmacharin Bhodabhiṣṭhu, who is doing such good work by his classes and lectures on Theosophy and Eastern Philosophy. We were most hospitably received in the house of one of our members, and a grand celebration of White Lotus Day, and a reception took place in the evening; over 300 people were present.

In San Francisco, amongst other interesting people, we had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Marques, whose observations on the Human Aura have lately been brought to the notice of the public.

Mrs. Besant's time was much taken up by the usual routine with the addition of as many Lodge meetings and talks to members as could be crowded into a limited time. On one day *five* meetings were addressed by Mrs. Besant; for, by some misapprehension, a public announcement had been made of a lecture which had been refused from want of time, and yet she would not disappoint those who might come; for her heart is in the task of helping all who are interested, and it is difficult for her to draw the line when it seems that good can be done.

From this centre visits were made by Mrs. Besant and the Countess Wachtmeister to Alameda, Oakland and Stanford University, and lectures were given by Mrs. Besant in each place, with the result that many new members joined the Society.

Then we passed on to San Jose, Santa Cruz, with its earnest group of members, and to Sacramento, and at each place lectures and talks helped the people to a fuller comprehension of the realities of the inner life.

At midnight on Friday, May 21st, we left Sacramento by the beautiful Mount Shasta route and on Sunday morning found ourselves in Portland, Oregon, and some of our members on the station platform to greet us with the same warm welcome and kindness that has been shown everywhere. A halt of two days, for two public lectures to be given by Mrs. Besant, was made there, and then we came on to Tacoma, on Puget Sound, where last night Mrs. Besant's lecture was attended by the more thoughtful people of the town.

The Boise T. S., Boise City, Idaho Territory, has accepted the suggestion of the General Secretary, and has relinquished its Charter. It has long been virtually dead, and should be recorded as actually so.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., GOLDEN GATE LODGE T. S.—The month of May marks an epoch in the history of our Lodge. Mrs. ANNIE BESANT has paid us a visit. All who have been similarly favored will appreciate what that means.

Accompanied by the Countess Wachtmeister and Miss A. J. Willson Mrs. Besant arrived on the 8th, and on the evening of the same day, which was also WHITE LOTUS DAY, a reception was tendered our distinguished visitors in Beethoven Hall. There was a large attendance, and, after a most interesting address by Mrs. Besant, a few remarks by way of greeting from the Countess Wachtmeister, music and short readings, all present were given the opportunity of being personally presented to our guests, and a very sociable evening was spent. During the nine days of her visit, Mrs. Besant was kept busy. We were all hungry, ravenous might better express it; and so there were meetings for members only, appointed hours when any and all might come with their questions; four public lectures and one (our Branch evening meeting) when all were invited. It was all intensely interesting and instructive; words fail to express what such a visit means. Before leaving, Mrs. Besant admitted 19 new members to our Lodge, with promise of others to follow. Mrs. Besant's departure has been made easier by our having the Brahmacharin Bodhabhikshu with us, and he has continued her work by giving lectures publicly Sunday evenings, and at our Headquarters afternoons and evenings, on the fundamental principles of Theosophy, and also explaining the Bhagavad Gita. His explanations are excellent. We really ought to profit greatly by all this instruction—and I think we will.

J. C. BRODIE.

ALAMEDA, CAL.—A new Branch which had been named the "Alameda Lodge of the T. S.," was called into existence last month, at the home of Dr. Julia Button, 2051, San Jose Ave., there were present some of our co-workers from San Francisco and Oakland. The officers elected were Dr. Julia Button, President and Col. Russell, Secretary and Treasurer; meetings will be held every Monday evening at the home of Col. and Mrs. Russell, and we expect to take up a systematic course of study.

LOS ANGELES, CAL., May 13.—Harmony Lodge T. S. has had the pleasure and advantage of a visit from Mrs. Annie Besant since our last report. She gave four public lectures here that attracted unusual attention among the more thoughtful in the community. Always eloquent and profoundly she appeared at her best and won hosts of friends and adherents to Theosophy. The membership of our Branch jumped from 24

to 42 in a week. The daily talks to Branch members by Mrs. Besant were eagerly attended by nearly all of us, and as a consequence we were put in line for better work than ever. It is really a privilege that the American Section should, and no doubt does, deeply appreciate to have Mrs. Besant's aid at this time. She was accompanied by the Countess Wachtmeister and Miss Willson, who are trained Theosophic workers, and who did much to reach the public by means of books and leaflets. The party stops next at San Francisco. Besides our regular Sunday evening lectures and the Wednesday evening Branch meeting, we have organized a study class and have written to Mrs. Cooper-Oakley for her valuable assistance.

HATTIE RANDOLPH, Sec'y.

SACRAMENTO, CAL, May, 1897.—The visit of Mrs. Annie Besant has resulted not only in arousing new interest in Theosophy, but in the formation of a new Branch, which will be known as the Sacramento Lodge of the T. S. The Charter has not been sent on to the General Secretary yet, as it was thought best to keep it open for a few days longer, to enable others to become charter members also; we expect to report a complete organization next month.

PHILADELPHIA, PA., May 4th.—At the request of Mrs. Besant's Secretary, Miss Willson, I wish to announce that a Branch of the Theosophical Society was formed here under the leadership of Mrs. Besant on April 3d, 1897. The membership is now 16. Mr. Alex. Goodrich of Fort Washington, Pa., was made President pro-tem; Dr. Charlotte Abbey, 206 South 7th St., was chosen Vice-President and Mr. Washington Shore, 1423 Locust St., Secretary and Treasurer. Name, "Nyina T. S." A charter has been granted by the Secretary of the Amer Section. The work so far has been a study of the Seven Principles of Man and Reincarnation, and an able and noteworthy paper was read by Dr. Abbey, strongly emphasizing the thought that "The Theosophical Doctrine must be carried into the daily life of each, person to be of any lasting good." We have had quite good success so far, and it seems as though the Branch would grow.

W. I. SHORE, Sec'y.

ST. PAUL, MINN., May 13.—The St. Paul Branch of the Theosophical Society continues to hold its regular meetings every Thursday evening in Room 537, Endicott Building, which are usually well attended. A "Secret Doctrine" class, conducted by the President, Mrs. A. K. Pruden, meets at her residence Monday evenings. There is much interest in

Theosophical matters in St. Paul, although people seem reluctant to identify themselves with the Society, being somewhat more conservative than is usual in Western cities. No difficulty is experienced, however, in securing an audience for a good speaker, and the lectures given by Countess Wachtmeister last winter were well attended and resulted in a number of additions to the Branch. The Branch lacks speakers, and most of the members are also quite closely occupied; therefore, it is difficult at times to provide interesting programs for outsiders attending the meetings, although the members are all interested and willing to do what they can. The present strength is 14 members and two associates.

JEANNIE M. CAMPBELL, Sec'y.

CHICAGO, ILL.—A reception was given by Chicago Branch, May 5th, to the two new lodges recently formed by Countess Wachtmeister while here, the "Englewood White Lodge" and "Eastern Psychology Lodge;" also to "Shila Branch" and members-at-large. It was well attended. White Lotus Day was observed by us as usual. Short addresses were made by Mr. Geo. E. Wright, Mrs. M. L. Howard and Mrs. Sears; also readings from *Light of Asia* and the *Bhagavad Gita*. The Third Volume of the Secret Doctrine is now being published, and we hope to have it ready for sale on or before the Annual Convention to be held here June 27th. We are all looking forward with great anticipation to Mrs. Besant's coming, and hope she can make us a long visit. Pandit Lalan (the Jain from Bombay, India) continues his lectures here on the Yoga Philosophy, Bhagavad Gita, Memory and the Tatwas, his work is having good results. Swami Abhayananda has also been lecturing in our rooms three times a week, teaching and lecturing on the Vedanta Philosophy. Her lectures are attracting much attention and brings many strangers to our rooms.

I. M. S.

CHICAGO, April 23d.—The Shila Branch reports a period of continued activity. The special lines of study are adhered to with unabated interest. The study of the "Growth of the Soul" is now in progress. It has organized a class for the study of the "Secret Doctrine," Mrs. M. L. Brainard interpreting the meaning and also the Sanskrit terms. Another class, under the auspices of the Shila, has been formed for the study of Theosophy for beginners, and is highly attended. Some of the members being outside of the Branch or connection with this line of thought. We regret the departure of Dr. Nyssen for his home in Brussels, Belgium. He is an active Theosophist, and at our last meeting gave a very interesting talk on "Vegetarianism and Embryology." The gradient progress which the embryo makes in two months now, and which it required ages

to do in times past, is something for us to think about in the progress of Evolution. It is an oyster at a certain stage, the fish form follows, then animal forms up to man." We beg to congratulate MERCURY upon the very interesting April number, and send best wishes for every success in the future.

SEATTLE, WASH., May 10th.—Amanda Lodge has moved into its large new hall, and the members are well pleased with the change. The Sunday and Wednesday meetings are very well attended—strangers and members taking part in discussing the papers read. On May 2d, Mr. Barnes read a most excellent paper on "Universal Brotherhood." We consider that this important subject should be presented frequently, in all its various phases, so that we may not only get an intellectual conception of this, the first object of our Society, but be enabled to realize in our hearts and lives something of the grandeur and beauty of oneness with the Universal Life. On May 9th, Mr. Oysten, who has given years of study to the subject of "Reincarnation," gave us a most delightful talk on that subject. Mr. Clark conducts the Secret Doctrine Class in a very profitable and interesting manner. The Lodge is now much better prepared to do efficient earnest work, many forces seem to be helping us to forward this great work for humanity.

HARRIET C. STEIN Sec'y.

SPOKANE, WASH., May 17.—During the month of April our Olympus Lodge held its regular weekly meeting every Sunday afternoon at 3 o'clock in Oliver Hall. At all of these meetings excellent lectures were delivered. On April 4th, Professor Mackenzie lectured on "The Theosophy of Prof. Henry Drummond," giving many facts and arguments to show that the teachings of the author of "Natural Law in the Spiritual World" are essentially Theosophical. On the 11th, Professor Mackenzie again lectured on "Theosophy Corroborated by Recent Scientific Discoveries," and showed that Theosophy is being corroborated on every hand to-day, particularly in Astronomy in the rotation periods of Mercury and Venus, in Geology, Physiology and Archæology. On April 18th, Mr. Joseph Cullen, our Vice-President, read an excellent paper on "The Fruits of Karma" and being Easter Sunday, Professor Mackenzie spoke briefly on the true esoteric meaning of the Resurrection. On the 25th of April, Professor Mackenzie again lectured on "Paracelsus, the Theosophist," showing that Paracelsus, who possessed almost universal knowledge, was a pure Theosophist. A number of questions are always asked by persons in the audience, and answered to the best of our ability. We regard the asking of questions as a very important part of our meetings.

JOHN MACKENZIE, Pres.

TOPEKA, KANSAS, May 10th.—The result of Mrs. Besant's visit to our city was the formation of a Branch of seven members, with a number of others, who are much interested and may join later if we succeed in arousing sufficient interest in our study. Mr. L. D. Humphreys was made President and Mrs. Elizabeth M. Wardell, Secretary. The fundamental principles of Theosophy are not new to most of us, we having been convinced of the truth of Reincarnation and Karma long ago, and of course find the study of these truths most fascinating. There are two or three of our members to whom it is all a new world of thought, and for these we need some simple elementary teaching. We are trying the manuals, and hope they may prove satisfactory.

ELIZABETH M. WARDELL.

STREATOR, ILL., May 24, STANTON BRANCH, T. S.—This Branch of the T. S. was organized March 2, 1897, with 11 charter members. The following officers were elected: F. Plumb, President; Maud Sims, Vice-President; Geo. Goulding, Secretary; Ethel G. Shay, Treasurer. A methodical study of Annie Besant's Manuel No. 1 is now going on, and the members seem to find the work attractive and interesting. The prospects for the growth of the Branch are of the brightest and applications for membership are still coming in. The meetings are still held fortnightly.

GEO GOULDING, Sec'y.

TORONTO, CANADA, May 22d.—The activities of the past month include a public meeting on the 14th of May, when Mr. G. G. Pursey, President of the Labor Exchange Association of Toronto, explained its objects and methods of operation. The relation of Theosophy to Social Reforms, as indicated by Madame Blavatsky and Mrs. Besant, was explained by the President of our Branch. The Wednesday evening class has finished its consideration of "The Seven Principles," devoting the last three meetings to a review of the work, with short papers thereon by some of the members. On the 26th inst., the second manual, "Reincarnation", will be taken up. Prof. Wm. O'Connor, M. A., M. D., one of the recent additions to our membership, has kindly consented to take charge of the class. An H. P. B. training class, with a membership of about 10, has recently been organized. Several outsiders have expressed their intention of joining the class. The Sunday evening public meetings have been carried on as usual, save that a change was made on Sunday evening, the 16th inst., when instead of an address, answers were given to questions which had been handed in during the preceding three weeks.

F. E. TITUS, Cor. Sec'y.

BOOK REVIEWS.

THEOSOPHIST, April. — In the *Old Diary Leaves* mention is again made of H. P. B.'s fiery temper and caustic tongue, which caused her so many enemies; it is also shown that her work was entirely different from that of Colonel Olcott, hers being exclusively literary, while that of the Colonel was organization and healing. An amusing incident of ingratitude from a Hindu for curing a sick man, is briefly narrated, as well as another case of sagacity, from a high-placed European lady at Ootacamund; for whom H. P. B. "duplicated" a gem valued at 200 rupies. A short explanation is made of "What are *Puranas*," and the well-known Hindu writer, Mr. K. N. Aiyar, gives the first installment of the "Manifestations of Sira and his Spouse," which promises to be fully equal to the many other learned productions of the same writer. Col. de Rochas, of Paris, contributes the first part of some mediumistic experiments on Eusapia and her spirit "John," which are rather insignificant so far. "A Soul's History" is that of many earnest souls, who, in seeking truth, have passed through many sects to reach the only satisfying light, Theosophy; and it contains a very appropriate hint about how to study the *Secret Doctrine*. Col. Olcott adds another contribution to the literature of the "Coming Calamities," in which will be found new facts to add to the articles published in last MERCURY. "Predestination and Free Will," by Mr. Charles, reaches its fifth chapter on "What do Hindu Books Say?" Mr. Thurston writes a few "Hints for Developing Mental Power," and Col. Olcott comments on the assassination of a well-known Pandit, Letth Ram, at Lahore, through the fanaticism of some musselmen dissenters. Correspondences and Reviewal Cuttings, conclude a very good number.

A. M.

METAPHYSICAL MAGAZINE, April—"Occult Science and Wisdom," by Franz Hartman, warns the meddlesome, who, without being ripe for it, attempt to drag down the holy science of occultism into the mire of vulgarity and personal greed. To such, instead of the rock of salvation, it shall be the quicksand of

destruction." "The Kingdom of Heaven," a study in comparative Religion, by Chas. Johnston, M. B. A. S., compares the teaching of Jesus, "who was a poet," with that of the Upanishads. In conclusion, the writer says "Whatever difference there is depends on the differing genius of language and not on any unlikeness of vision, so that where Jesus says: "The Kingdom of the Heavens is within you," the Upanishads say, "The World of the Eternal is inwardly in yourselves; nay, the Eternal is your very Self." "Political Equality," by E. Jennie H. Richardson, is remarkable for depth of thought and harmonious treatment. "The Inner Light," by Edward A. Pennock, illustrates the success of the silent and interior methods of "The Voice of Psychic Force," "The Transcendental Ego," "Plato on Immortality," "The Relation of Mind to Body," "Hindu Deities and Cosmic Laws," complete a number of more than usual interest and value.

THEOSOPHY in Australasia has emerged from the tentative period, and the April number will appear as a 16-page magazine, with cover. Judging from its energy and ability in the past, we predict for this new era of its life great success and increased usefulness. The March number contains a very excellent and suggestive article on "The Soul." The Third Annual Convention was announced for April 16th and 17th.

NOVA LUX of Rome, February—Under the title of "March of Martinism," Mr. F. Bruni gives some brief but very interesting information on that Occult Brotherhood, in which ceremonies of the old mysteries were infused by the Spanish Occulist Martinez de Pasqually, towards 1728, and which has been especially revived since 1887. It seems somewhat akin to Masonry, and appears to have many lodges, not only in Europe, but also in America, where it has 20 lodges and 120 groups.

We are at last able to announce that the Third Volume of the Secret Doctrine will be ready on June 13th. It will be issued simultaneously by the Chicago and London Headquarters.

LIGHTLY to laugh at and ridicule another is wrong.

A KEY TO THE ESOTERIC MEANING OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA by Pandit F. K. Lalan, Chicago, price 10 cents. This pamphlet fills a great need, and all students of the GITA will welcome it gladly. There is not a superfluous word in its 10 pages; no theories nor opinions to confuse, while its low price places it within reach of all.

DIE UEBERSINNLICHE WELT, for March, contains the first part of an article on "Monoideism, or Key to Magical Psychology," by Dr. Carl Du Prel of Munich. Then follows a long report of experiments on the seeress Eusapia Paladina in Paris. Then K. A. Hager continues his essay on the projection of mind images on a plane surface in space. An appeal for a modern martyr and miscellanies complete the number.

Received: *Prasnottara, Sophia, The Thinker, Mahabodhi Journal, Self-Knowledge, The Brahmavadin, Unity, Rays of Light, The World's Advance Thoughts, The Arya Bala Bodhini, The Theosophical Gleaner, The Exodus, Chicago Vegetarian, Awakened India.*

Notices.

Count Axel[†] Wachtmeister, who kindly assumed temporarily the Editorship of MERCURY during my absence in Europe, having now resigned those duties, all correspondence should be addressed to me as before, Room 6, Native Sons' Building, 414 Mason St., San Francisco, Cal.

W. J. WALTERS.

"The Law of Sacrifice"—a Chapter in Mrs. Annie Besant's forthcoming work "The Ancient Wisdom"—will be the leading article in the July Number of MERCURY.

IN four ways may the flatterer be known a false friend—he assents when you do wrong; he assents when you do right; he sounds your praises before your face, and speaks ill of you behind your back.

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER.

[This Department will be devoted exclusively to children ; questions and answers from Lotus Circles on Theosophical Subjects are invited and will receive special attention.]

NATURE'S PARABLES.

[Continued from February Number.]

Submission.

The Lake had changed its mind!

Yesterday the white caps were playing along the shore and the spray was dashing high in the air, and this morning when I looked out to see the beautiful maiden, of whom I have told you, the silence of death met my gaze. From being a jubilant whirling mass of water, it had become a solid, smooth, hard surface, with no stir to be seen anywhere. "Maybe some one should be looking after the little people who make the Lake so merry!" I said to myself. So putting on my heavy coat, overshoes and mittens, and wrapping my ears closely—for the morning was very cold—I hastened down to the shore to see what it meant.

Yes, it was solid! Though early, some of the boys had arrived before me, and already on their skates were gliding over the smooth surface.

"What has become of the merry little people?" I said to myself, just then I heard a little "squeak!" down at my feet, and so bent down to listen. Such a jabbering and talking as was going on down there!

At first I could not distinguish anything clearly; then, very soon, I seemed to hear orders given by some one in command: "Ready, now, ready!" "Steady now steady!" and then a myriad of voices took it up like a chorus, with words something like these:

"The old Frost King has come to his own—

Build him a throne!

Build him a throne!

With clanging and clinging

And bright hammers swinging,

Steady now, ready now,

Ready and steady."

“The old Frost King has come to his own—
Build him a throne!
Build him a throne!
With ruby red and emerald green
Sapphire blue and filmy sheen,
Steady now, ready now,
Ready and steady.”

I stood up and opened my eyes with astonishment. I had not thought of the water sprites as workers, but only as bright fleeting things. Again I stooped to listen and their tune had changed. It was very sweet, but low and deep and thrilling:

‘The crystals are creaking where sunshine is sleeping,
Hail to the King!
Hail to the King!
We yield him our homage—glad service we bring—
Steady now, ready now,
Ready and steady,”

The boys and girls on their skates were laughing so merrily that I knew they had been touched by the song of the water sprites, but of course they did not know why they were so glad.

When I came home I told the little Boy all about it, just as I am telling you, and he wanted to go and listen to the builders. So I wrapped him warm and we went down to the shore and a little way out on the ice. He felt the happiness but could not hear the song.

After a little time he became very cold, and I wanted to take him back to the house, but he did not wish to go and—he cried!

“Now, dear,” I said to him, “you are doing just what the water sprites did not do. When the Frost King came, and it was necessary for them to give up to him, they did so without losing any happiness.” Then I proposed a race to the house, and when we got there his eyes were sparkling and his cheeks were rosy.

“Now,” I said, “we have brought the Angel of the ice home with us. His name is ‘Submission.’”

LYDIA BELL.

KEEP watch over your hearts.

HOW KARMA GROWS.

"Mother, wot is a Karmic agent," said a small voice at the Breakfast table one morning, "is it a agent wot goes 'roun' sellin' Karma to people? Daddy was a telling you somethin' 'bout Karmic agentses th' other day!"

His mother paused, smiling, as she carefully took from the milk jug three or four unhappy flies, whose greediness promised fair to end their lives with speed.

"See son," she said, as they began to shake the milk from their legs, and crawl heavily away, "I am a Karmic agent now to those poor flies, whose ignorance of what the milk could do for them nearly caused them to lose their lives. You know an agent is put in the place of some one else to do certain work for them, and that 'some one' was, just now, a tiny voice speaking within myself, telling me if I did not save the poor flies they would drown."

But our Mat told me they was pesky critters, only sent to worry us, and eat up all our nice cakes and jams an' things, and that she'd like to kill the hull lot o' them."

"Just so," said the mother voice gravely, "Mat wasn't taught that all beings are united together, and all breathe in the Divine Father's Love—the Great Breath is divided into all the lesser breaths—men and animals, even the tiniest insects share this wonderful gift alike, therefore she does not know that it is wrong to kill the meanest of the creatures God has made."

The small inquirer's big violet eyes grew very solemn as he asked, "Is Mat a Karmic agent then?"

"Not exactly," said his mother, "but you know if we take the life of any creature the loving Father has made, we are harming ourselves by gathering up bad thoughts and making them act against others in a way that causes THEM to hate and kill. So we have to watch our thoughts ever so closely, and not let unkind ones into our minds, or we shall suffer just as much as if we put our fingers on the hot stove and burnt them, as you did the other day."

"Well," said the small questioner, after a pause, "I'll just get Mat to give the flies a real good tea to-night to show them that she didn't really mean to have any bad thoughts about them, but just to keep them out of the way of drowning themselves."

FIO HARA.